

A REPORT ON ORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
WITH EMPHASIS ON KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, PARTICULARLY
THE PRESENT DISTRICTS OF AUBURN, BLACK DIAMOND,
ENUMCLAW, FEDERAL WAY, KENT, AND LESTER

by

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

I. THE PROBLEM

Justification for a report of the problem. Shifts in the distribution of population, saturation of many metropolitan areas, rapid suburban growth, greater demands on public education, and demands by citizens for more efficient and effective use of tax moneys are factors causing renewed looks in the direction of school reorganization. With attention brought to the changes in the school organization of states throughout the nation, it is essential to study the numerous ways in which current problems are being met.

The general reduction in the number of school districts is shown by the following figures from The United States Bureau of the Census:¹

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Number of School Districts In the United States</u>
1941-1942	108,579
1951-1952	67,355
1956-1957	50,454
1959-1960	40,054
1961-1962	34,678

¹United States Bureau of the Census, Census of Governments: 1962, Governmental Organization, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 3-11.

A simple calculation shows that the number of operating districts in the 1961-1962 school year was less than one-third of the number of districts in operation in the 1941-1942 school year.

The state of Washington showed a similar trend in the span of twenty years with a reduction from 1,323 districts in 1941 to 348 districts in 1962.² Even though the number of districts has been dramatically decreased in the past twenty years, the advisability of further change needs to be studied.

In the state of Washington, rapid population growth, changes in service areas, discrepancies in per pupil valuation between districts, and the establishment of community colleges for the joint benefit of existing districts indicate that a current evaluation of district problems is warranted. This is particularly true of King County.³ Excluding Seattle proper, King County has a projected estimate of 111 per cent increase in school population for the twenty-five years between 1960 and 1985.⁴ Therefore, to see if current organizational needs are being met, it is advisable to examine King County, particularly the Auburn, Black Diamond, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Kent, and Lester Districts.

The American Association of School Administrators has this to

²Melville B. Kelly, "The Case for School District Reorganization" (Seattle, King County School District Organization Committee, 1963), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

³King County is the most populous county in Washington State with a population of 939,700 in 1960.

⁴L. M. Dimmitt and Edward B. Sand, A Guide for School Planning in King County, Washington, A Report Prepared by the King County Planning Department and King County School Districts (Seattle: 1962), p. 40.

say about school districts:

School district organization has never been regarded as static and permanent—as a sacred entity that should not be changed. Quite to the contrary, it has been looked upon as a governmental device through which people can work together in organizing, supporting, controlling, and operating their schools. When it serves its function well it has been satisfactory. When it has not been able to do the job for which it was created it has been modified. It is an integral part of the on-going, developing, ever-changing process of American life.⁵

These may be the conclusions of knowledgeable educators, but it seems that citizens of many communities believe that the school districts are now, and should be forever as they have been in the past. This parallels the adage, "What was good enough for father is good enough for me." As will be shown in Chapters III and IV, there seems to be considerable opposition to change. Therefore, the reasons for and against change need to be analyzed.

Definition of the problem. In this study the general patterns and methods of school district organization and reorganization will be discussed with particular emphasis on Washington State and King County, Washington. The history, laws, and finance of public schools in Washington State will be discussed. The results of an opinionnaire sent to administrators and directors of the Auburn, Black Diamond, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Kent, and Lester Districts in King County, Washington will be reported and evaluated.

⁵ American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1958), p. 21.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

This report shall deal primarily with administrative reorganization, but not necessarily with school consolidation.

Consolidation. For the purpose of this report, the term consolidation will denote the changing of attendance areas for a specific school or schools which may result in the transportation of students to a larger and more centralized school building.

Attendance area. Attendance area shall mean that specific residence area which represents the domicile of students attending school in a specific school building.

School reorganization. School reorganization shall mean a change in the administrative levels of the public schools, usually to include control over a larger geographical area and usually a larger portion of the population than was originally included. School reorganization may, in some cases, effect consolidation, but does so only when the attendance areas are of inadequate size to provide a broad and comprehensive program for the students served, and where geographical isolation does not exist.

CHAPTER II

A HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

In this chapter a brief, general history of education in the state of Washington will be presented.

I. A REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN THE EARLY NORTHWEST COUNTRY

Education before territorial organization. A history of schools in Washington must necessarily begin with the origin of schools in the entire Pacific Northwest since Washington's history is so tightly bound to that of the whole Northwest country. The Spaniards first brought education to the Northwest in their manner of conquering by the sword and the cross. History records that in the expeditionary force of Esteban Martinez to Nootka Sound in 1789, there were four Catholic fathers who were to "spread the Word of God" to the natives of what is now Vancouver Island (part of British Columbia, Canada).¹

Later an occasional trader or trapper, though not primarily interested in either religious or cultural development, passed on a few pieces of information to the none too inquisitive Indians. Ross Cox, clerk and historian at Fort Astoria,² stressed the need for missionary

¹Oscar Osburn Winther, The Great Northwest (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952), p. 206.

²Fort Astoria was a trading post founded by John Jacob Astor's American Fur Company and later owned by the Northwest Company at the mouth of the Columbia River in present day Oregon.

work to carry the torch of religion and learning westward or as he said, "proclaim to the benighted savages 'glory to God in the highest...!'"³ However, both the Northwest Company (American) and the Hudson's Bay Company (English) were little interested in missionaries in their fur empires.

Nonetheless, Winther records that the first school organized in the Oregon Country was operated at Fort Vancouver⁴ by John Ball from November 19, 1832 through March 1, 1838. He was succeeded by Solomon H. Smith who was in charge of the school until he fell in love with and married the wife of the fort baker and was relieved of his position. He then moved to French Prairie⁵ and established the first non-mission school in what is now Oregon State. Meanwhile, Cyrus Shepard took over the job of teaching Indians, half-breeds, and an occasional child of white immigrants at Fort Vancouver.⁶

The protestant mission groups of the Lees, Spaldings, Whitmans, and others also heard and answered the repeated calls to teaching. A school was opened at the Methodist Mission of Jason and Daniel Lee in

³Winther, op. cit., p. 206.

⁴Fort Vancouver was the large Hudson's Bay Company trading post on the Columbia River near what is now Vancouver, Washington.

⁵French Prairie was a settlement near present day Salem, Oregon.

⁶Winther, op. cit., p. 206.

the Willamette Valley⁷ in the winter of 1834-1835 whose student body at its inception consisted of three lazy Indians. By November, though, according to the record book, there was instruction of as many as twenty students, and "several of the children are making laudable improvement."⁸ Within two years the Lees' school was officially known as the "Indian Mission Manual Labor School" and from this humble origin, Willamette University eventually grew and was chartered in 1853.⁹

Cushing Eells began an Indian school at Tshimakain¹⁰ in 1839 and found the children able but not eager to learn. At Waiilatpu¹¹ Marcus and Narcissa Whitman offered education to white children also, most of them orphans whose parents had died on the Oregon Trail.¹²

At French Prairie, Father Francois Blanchet, one of the more famous Catholic missionaries, founded St. Joseph's School for Boys in 1842, and six sisters of Notre Dame de Namur founded a convent and school for girls in 1844.¹³ The "Catholic Ladder" was used to spread education and Catholicism among the natives. The "Ladder" was a chart about six feet

⁷The Willamette Valley is in present day Oregon.

⁸Winther, *op. cit.*, p. 208. ⁹Ibid.

¹⁰The Tshimakain Mission near present day Spokane, Washington, was established by the American Board of Missions representing the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Dutch Reformed denominations.

¹¹Waiilatpu was also an American Board mission near modern day Spokane, Washington.

¹²Winther, *op. cit.*, p. 208.

¹³Dorothy O. Johansen and Charles M. Gates, Empire of the Columbia, (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1957), p. 219.

by eighteen inches in dimension on which illustrations and bars were painted showing the concepts of the four millennial periods, heretics, heaven, hell, and other church concepts.

Soon the emphasis began shifting from education of the Indians to the education of children of white settlers. Elementary "Term Schools" began appearing. The first, Jefferson Institute, was organized by John E. Lyle in 1846 in what is now Polk County of Oregon State and others soon followed so that by 1850, they were prevalent in the settled parts of the Northwest.¹⁴

Education after territorial organization. Oregon Territory's first legislative session in 1849 in Oregon City enacted an organic act which set aside the sixteenth and thirty-sixth sections of each township. The interest on money obtained from the sale of these lands was to be used to support public education. The interest was insufficient in amount to support the common schools so in 1853-1854 the law was revised to provide an additional two mill tax levy in each county and to add money secured from fines for breaking territory laws.¹⁵

With the advent of settlement on Puget Sound, A. W. Moore became the first schoolmaster (also postmaster) at Tumwater in 1852. Cowlitz Landing began a school the next year followed by schools at Port Townsend and Seattle.¹⁶ These schools were conducted on a private basis, usually sponsored by a church denomination, with pupils paying eight

¹⁴Winther, op. cit., p. 209. ¹⁵Ibid., p. 211. ¹⁶Ibid., p. 210.

to ten dollars each per term. The first schools were ungraded, teachers were often itinerant, facilities were crude, and instruction simple. The early teachers were usually men, the Catholic nuns being the only women teachers in the Oregon Territory until the mid 1850's.¹⁷ Salaries were very low and often were supplemented by board and keep.

When Washington became a territory almost identical legislation was enacted by its legislature in 1854. In 1871 a "Territorial Board of Education" was instituted to adopt textbooks and prepare courses of study.¹⁸

II. EDUCATION IN WASHINGTON FOLLOWING STATEHOOD

Education before 1900. In 1889 when the Washington State Constitution was adopted, there were only 72,000 children between the ages of four and twenty-one and education was largely a matter of local concern and support. County superintendents divided inhabited areas into districts that were able to maintain schools from local district levies with some help from county taxes.¹⁹

The average school was small with a usual term of four months each year. Many had one room for all grades.²⁰ Winther reports that not until the 1880's was there an attempt to enforce required attendance

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Frank B. Brouillet, Education in Washington, A Report by the Washington State Legislature Interim Committee on Education (Seattle: University of Washington, 1962), p. 25.

¹⁹Ibid. ²⁰Ibid.

and it was well into the century (with certain exceptions) that a compulsory nine month term basis, rather than a three to six months, began to be used.²¹ The number of teachers, average teachers' salaries, and average number of months in the school year as reported by the Washington Education Association are shown in Table I.²²

TABLE I
AVERAGE NUMBER OF TEACHERS, TEACHERS' AVERAGE SALARY,
AVERAGE NUMBER OF MONTHS IN SCHOOL TERM
IN WASHINGTON IN SEVENTY YEARS

Year	Number of Teachers	Average Salary	Average Number of Months in School Year
1890	1,610	\$ 266.30	4.86
1900	3,784	361.78	6.00
1910	7,170	691.87	7.67
1920	10,197	1,125.38	8.80
1930	11,941	1,525.30	8.91
1940	11,478	1,696.00	9
1950	16,082	3,443.00	9
1960	27,112	5,367.00	9

Secondary schools received little consideration in Washington State until after the Civil War and even then developed very slowly.²³ In 1889, only 320 students, 6 per cent of the enrollment, were in

²¹Winther, op. cit., p. 211.

²²Albert E. Gerritz, "WEA's First 75 Years," Washington Education, LXXV (April, 1964) p. 30.

²³Winther, op. cit., p. 212.

secondary schools.²⁴ This percentage increased to 16.3 in 1921, 38.3 in 1939, and 47.7 in 1963.²⁵

The new constitution provided for the election of a State Superintendent of Public Instruction but no educational qualifications were established for the office.²⁶ One of the first acts of the first legislature was to set up a State Board of Education to consist of the State Superintendent and four persons to be appointed by the Governor, two of whom had to be teachers.²⁷ Since no educational qualifications were set up for the State Superintendent or the two non-teaching members of the Board, it is apparent that in the early days there was no strong belief that supervision of public schools was a technical matter.²⁸

Education after 1900. As the state's population grew and schools increased in number and size it became apparent that trained educational leadership was needed. In 1909 the State Board of Education was changed to include presidents of the state colleges and universities, county and city school administrators, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. In 1938 the latter office was made elective on a non-partisan basis. In 1947 the State Board of Education was once again made a lay board.²⁹

The county school superintendency, established by statute in 1890,

²⁴Gerritz, op. cit., p. 53. ²⁵Ibid., p. 29.

²⁶Brouillet, op. cit., p. 25. ²⁷Ibid., p. 26.

²⁸Ibid. ²⁹Ibid., p. 27.

often suffered because superintendents lacked qualifications for the office and had inadequate salaries and budgets. These obstacles to sound administration, however, are gradually being overcome.³⁰ County boards of education elected to work with the county superintendent were established in 1955.³¹

The rise of the junior college movement in Washington. As in the rest of the nation, the junior college in Washington has been a product of the twentieth century. The theory that all students, rich or poor, should have the opportunity for higher education led to junior colleges being formed.³²

The first junior college in Washington was started in Centralia in 1925. Others were soon established. The early junior colleges were small and their purpose was to prepare students for entry into four year colleges. They were tied to the public schools but weren't really a part of either the common schools or the higher education system.³³ Numerous bills were introduced in the Legislature for junior college support in the 1920's and 1930's but failed. However, in 1941 House Bill 102 provided a basis for their support.³⁴ Junior colleges have expanded rapidly since 1941. In 1961 they were designated by the legislature as community colleges.³⁵ In 1963, 2.4 per cent of the state's pupils were enrolled in community colleges.³⁶

³⁰Ibid., p. 30-31. ³¹Ibid., p. 31. ³²Ibid., p. 13.

³³Ibid., p. 14. ³⁴Ibid., p. 15. ³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Gerritz, op. cit., p. 29.

CHAPTER III

SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES

In this Chapter a review of district organization in the nation will be presented, recommendations for district size and organization will be discussed, and some of the recent trends in school district organization will be summarized.

I. PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

Problems of the too small district. Recently the American Association of School Administrators reported that two out of three secondary schools in the United States were too small to do a good job, one-third of them having an enrollment of fewer than 100 students.¹ In many schools the tax base is outmoded and the amount of money available is insufficient for the jobs to be done. Other districts are too small to use the financial resources that they have available and are too small to offer high quality educational programs.²

The limitations of these very small districts appear in barren, meager, insipid curriculums; inability to attract and hold good teachers

¹American Association of School Administrators, School District Organization, (Washington: American Association of School Administrators, 1958), p. 12.

²Ibid., p. 13.

and administrators; inability to construct necessary school plants; waste of manpower in unjustifiably small classes and low pupil-teacher ratios; unreasonably high per pupil cost for the type of educational programs offered; inefficient use of financial and other educational resources; poor building locations; inequalities in school support burdens; complex and cumbersome formulas for state aid distribution; and lack of specialized educational services that add to the program of education.³

Problems of large districts. Even though there are still many problems with small districts, the main problems in district organization have shifted in the past few years from small districts in rural areas to districts in suburban areas that have been overwhelmed by rapid population growth, i.e., there is the necessity to shift attention from consolidation to reorganization.⁴

Metropolitan areas are nearly always an aggregation of municipalities rather than a single municipal unit. Some independence must be relinquished for the betterment of the schools. Frequently the schools of one municipality may have half empty classrooms while those of an adjoining school district are overflowing with a rapidly expanding school population.⁵

Many times the administrative organization has not kept pace with

³Ibid., p. 23. ⁴Ibid., p. 22.

⁵Office of the Superintendent of the Toronto Public Schools, "A Unique Municipal Experiment" (Toronto, Canada: Toronto Public Schools, 1957), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

the growing school needs, often because of the "foot dragging" of those who wish to retain the status quo. These districts are now facing problems that the large city school districts faced some years ago.

Financial problems of districts. There is wide variation in the amount of money available to districts. In an extreme example, the per pupil taxable wealth in one California district was one million dollars of assessed valuation per pupil in average daily attendance while another California district had only \$110 per pupil.⁶ It is not uncommon for the county's richest district to have twenty to fifty times as much wealth per pupil as the poorest district.⁷ In 1955-1956, of two small districts in suburban Des Moines, Iowa that adjoined each other, one had an assessed per pupil taxable valuation of \$216,271 while the other had \$1,668 per pupil. The total tax millage in the wealthier district was slightly over two mills while in the poorer district it was 116 mills.⁸

Problems with state laws. Statutes of the various states may be a barrier to reorganization. Many lawsuits are filed as a result of reorganization and consolidation. These would not have reached court had school men been familiar with the legal aspects of the school changes.

⁶State Reconstruction and Re-employment Commission, The Administration, Organization, and Financial Support of the Public School System, State of California (Sacramento: State Reconstruction and Re-employment Commission, 1945), p. 37 as reported by the American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 84.

⁷American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 84.

⁸Ibid.

State laws concerning school organization and reorganization vary widely.⁹

Deterrents to reorganization. Several reasons for the continuation of outmoded districts remain: (1) The American people seem to have a traditional desire to retain home rule. (2) Many communities were formed by people who wanted homogeneity of religious, ethnic, or political viewpoints with the school an important agency for perpetuation of the culture so that any attempt to alter the school district represents a threat to the community. (3) Often people simply are not aware that the educational program in their district is inferior. This may be caused by public apathy or indifference, but often the people simply have no criteria for measuring the quality of education in the locality. (4) Educators have been unable or unwilling to agree on the answer to the question of what kind of school organization will offer the best educational program.¹⁰ Fear that an elementary school may be closed or that reorganization will result in centralization of governmental control also tend to make people wary of reorganization.¹¹ Effective lobby groups may block reorganization. Pierce says, "The Legislature (Washington) itself has heard the hallowed voices of local control advocates who talk about it as they do mother love,

⁹Lee O. Garber, "Investigate; Then Consolidate," The Nation's Schools, LXXII (November, 1963), p. 64.

¹⁰Virgil E. Blanke, "Reorganization: A Continuing Problem" (Chicago: University of Chicago Administrators' Notebook, 1962), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

¹¹Washington State Research Council, What Is a School District?, A Report Prepared by the Washington State Research Council (Seattle: The Washington State Research Council, 1957), p. 18.

the flag, and apple pie."¹²

II. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING PROGRAMS, ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION, AND STUDENT POPULATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Knowledgeable leaders in the movement for improvement of education are not necessarily in agreement about recommendations concerning district student population. Therefore, several opinions will be presented. Suggested numbers of students are discussed pertaining only to district size as a whole and not to specific attendance units.

Programs of districts. A strong district is able to provide education for all the pupils residing in its area, from kindergarten through high school, and in some areas, junior college. It has a competent staff, schools that are properly located to meet community needs, and a sound method of financing and administering its program.¹³ The effective school district should be capable of making economical use of school funds.¹⁴

The district should be able to provide complete educational services including special classes at all ages for the handicapped; health,

¹²Lawrence Pierce, "School District Reorganization--A Journey That Must Not End," (A report prepared for the King County School Organization Committee, Seattle: October, 1962), p. 2. (Mimeographed.)

¹³Washington State Research Council, op. cit., p. 13-15.

¹⁴C. O. Fitzwater, "Optimum Size of School Districts to Meet Educational Needs of the Present Decade," (Excerpts from an address to the Washington Association of County Boards of Education, Spokane, Washington, 1962), p. 4. (Mimeographed.)

guidance, and counseling services; remedial programs for under-achievers, and special programs for the gifted.¹⁵ Vocational programs for those students who will not go to college should be provided.¹⁶

Administrative organization of districts. The American Association of School Administrators has formed these guidelines pertaining to administrative organization: Each administrative level must have tasks and functions of its own to perform or its existence cannot be justified. Tasks should be shifted to maintain the maximum effectiveness of the agencies. No amount of shifting can overcome a weakness in any of the organizations in performing its functions.¹⁷ The Association further expresses the problem in this manner:

A state department of education or an intermediate district, no matter how extensive its services, cannot supplant the need for soundly organized district. No amount of services provided from the outside can make a one-room school district an effective administrative unit or a very small high school an adequate instructional unit.¹⁸

Blanke states that members of the board of education should be capable persons who are able to intelligently govern the operation of the school district with regard to community expectations and be able to evaluate the functioning of the superintendent. The superintendent should be competent and able to advise the board. He should also function effectively as the administrative head of the district. Each

¹⁵Blanke, op. cit., p. 2. ¹⁶Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁷American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

¹⁸Ibid.

attendance unit should have a full-time principal. Resource personnel and supervisory staff should be provided.¹⁹

As reported by the American Association of School Administrators' Commission on School District Reorganization, "the unified, or twelve grade, school district which is adequate in size has proven to be the best system of school government devised by the American people." It brings the community a number of important advantages: (1) The organization fosters ease and simplicity of educational control. (2) It permits all community citizens to have a voice in the whole educational program. (3) It makes all of the wealth subject to property tax available to support the whole educational program and eliminates tax inequities. (4) It fosters effective use of financial resources so that school funds can go for greater needs and eliminates competition for school tax. (5) It eliminates unnecessary duplication in school business management. (6) It permits use of special service personnel throughout the system. (7) It makes establishment of adequately sized schools possible. (8) It makes co-ordination of the total educational program possible and enables the administration to keep the school program adapted to changing needs and conditions.²⁰

Community districts are formed without regard to township or county boundary lines. Laws in several states allow these districts to

¹⁹Blanke, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁰American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., pp. 92-94.

exist. The experience of the past fifteen years has shown that there are several basic considerations in forming the community district. A village with an undersize high school does not make an adequate center for a community district even though the new district may have much open-country area. It is usually necessary to include two or more villages. The best single index of reorganization progress is the amount of reduction in the number of districts operating high schools. It has been demonstrated that two or more towns may be included in a new district without harm to the natural association of people and it can provide a modern school program because it has enough pupils.²¹

Student population of districts. As opinions about the optimum and minimum size of districts vary widely, some of the divergent opinions of educators and lay committees as well as state recommendations are presented in this section of the report.

The Washington State Research Council states that a strong district has at least 1,200 pupils. It reasons that with a smaller number, per pupil cost for a good program is prohibitive.²² In 1960, The Committee for Economic Development also urged that districts have a minimum size of 1,200 pupils.²³ The President's Commission on National Goals

²¹Ibid., p. 100.

²²Washington State Research Council, op. cit., p. 13.

²³Committee for Economic Development, "Paying for Better Public Schools," A Statement on National Policy by the Research and Policy Committee, March, 1960, as reported by Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 2.

used 2,000 as a guide for minimum enrollment.²⁴

Blanke recommends at least 2,000 pupils in a district, but suggests that for a district of this size, special services would have to be obtained from a larger intermediate unit. For a district to provide its own special services, it would need about 11,000 pupils. To illustrate, using a pupil teacher ratio of 25:1, an administrative unit of 10,000 to 12,000 pupils is necessary to provide special services. Using the ratio of 30:1, a unit of 12,000 to 15,000 is necessary. The latter number of pupils is sufficient to warrant a junior college, if at least one-third of the high school graduates in the district attend the junior college.²⁵

The National Committee on School District Reorganization says that the more pupils that a district has up to 10,000, the broader the program of education that can be offered at a reasonable cost.²⁶ Fitzwater reports that studies at the University of Illinois indicated that for the best use of staff resources, a school district should have 5,000 pupils.²⁷

²⁴President's Commission on National Goals, "Goals for Americans," A Report Prepared by the President's Commission on National Goals (Columbia University: 1960), as reported in Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 2.

²⁵Blanke, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

²⁶The National Commission on School District Reorganization, A Key to Better Education, A Report Prepared by the National Commission on School District Reorganization (Washington: 1947), p. 10, as reported by the Washington State Research Council, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁷Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 4.

According to Pierce, the minimum preferred enrollment for a school district is 12,000 pupils when the full benefits to be derived from a comprehensive program of education are considered.²⁸ Kelly agrees with the minimum size suggested by Pierce, but goes on to indicate that efficiency in a district increases as the pupil population approaches 30,000.²⁹

Several states have made recommendations for size of districts within their boundaries, and in some states the minimums have been set by law. The Washington State standard for minimum enrollment in districts has been set at 1,200. However, the King County Planning Department found this number to be unrealistically low for an urban program where a full range of course offerings and special services are given emphasis.³⁰

Some other states have set lower standard sizes than this. Wisconsin districts are to have at least 800 to 1,000 pupils.³¹ Indiana has set minimum standards so that each proposed reorganized school district be populous enough to have at least 1,000 resident pupils in average

²⁸Pierce, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁹M. B. Kelly, "A Case for School District Reorganization," (Seattle: King County School District Organization Committee, 1962), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

³⁰L. M. Dimmitt and Edward B. Sand, A Guide for School Planning in King, County, Washington, A Report Prepared by the King County Planning Department and King County School Districts (Seattle: 1962), p. 40.

³¹Washington State Research Council, op. cit., p. 13.

daily attendance. However, if it is impossible to meet the minimum enrollment in sparsely settled areas in the state, the minimum geographical area must be at least 144 square miles.³²

California and Pennsylvania have set higher minimum enrollments than Washington. In 1953, California's reorganization law directed districts to plan an optimum size of 10,000 and a minimum size of 2,000.³³ Pennsylvania's newest redistricting law set a minimum of 4,000 pupils for most of the state's districts by 1965.³⁴

Very little data is available on the maximum effective school size. Fitzwater reports that Conant recommends in a recent publication that large city schools be decentralized. Chicago, Detroit, St. Louis, and Atlanta have begun decentralization plans. The Chicago system has been divided into twenty units, each headed by an assistant superintendent and each having about 25,000 pupils enrolled in elementary and secondary schools.³⁵

Columbia University studies have indicated the communities of 20,000 to 50,000 in total population usually have optimum conditions for

³²"Questions and Answers about the Indiana School Corporation Reorganization Act," A Report Prepared by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Indianapolis: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, November, 1961), p. 6. (Mimeographed.)

³³Washington State Research Council, op. cit., p. 13.

³⁴N. Dean Evans, "The Case for Reorganization of School Districts in Pennsylvania" (Pennsylvania: Delaware County Public Schools, 1962), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

³⁵Fitzwater, op. cit., p. 3.

promoting an educational system of high quality. The same studies show that conditions are generally less favorable in communities above 50,000 population.³⁶

III. SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE UNITED STATES

Levels of administration. Administrative agencies are of three types: local districts, intermediate administrative units, and the state education agencies.³⁷ In 1958 fourteen states had two level structures consisting of only local and state units, thirty-four also had intermediate units. In twenty-seven of the states the intermediate unit was the county, but in New England and New York the intermediate units were smaller than counties.³⁸

The functions of intermediate districts recently have defined growing emphasis on leadership, co-ordination of activities and provision for special services. In several states, intermediate district boards elected by the people and empowered to make policies for the local districts have been created. If the intermediate districts broaden and enrich the local educational program while fostering local initiative for better schools, they function effectively. However, in many cases, the intermediate district has not kept pace with the need for its services.³⁹

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 64.

³⁸Ibid., p. 65. ³⁹Ibid.

The names and designations of districts vary widely from state to state. Florida, Nevada, and West Virginia have only county districts. Twelve states have only two types of school districts, nine of them having only county and city or independent districts. There are three types of districts in fifteen states, four types in six states, five types in seven states, six types in three states, and eight types in two states.⁴⁰

The methods of classification vary greatly. In New England, the basic pattern is of township and city units. Some of these have been reorganized for high school purposes. In Arizona and California the scope of grades is the basis for classification. In some states the classification is based on district population and in Colorado, on the school census. In most states no single basis is used; some being designated by scope of grade organization, others by whether they are city, township, community, consolidated, or independent districts. Independent means different things in different states. Rather than being logical and orderly, these designations represent the efforts made to adapt and repair district structures as needed.⁴¹

A large part of reorganization from 1948 to 1958 was to merge small elementary districts into large elementary administrative units with the high school pupils being sent to another district. The decrease in number of school districts since 1940 is shown on page 1 of this report. Many of these elementary districts are in cities as well as rural areas. Legally, all of Arizona's and most of California's cities have separately

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 85. ⁴¹Ibid., p. 86.

organized elementary districts. Some have a 1-8 organization, others a 1-6 or K-6 program.⁴²

In 1957 there were about 1,200 districts operating secondary schools only, in which over one million pupils were enrolled. These districts were superimposed on elementary district territory. Over two-thirds of the total number were in California, Illinois, and Kansas. These districts had variations of secondary structure from grades seven through fourteen. In 1958, however, most community and junior colleges were operated by districts which also operated both elementary and high schools.⁴³

Size of school districts. In 1962 there were 37,019 school systems in the United States, 30,988 of which operated schools. Of these, 17,345 operated only elementary schools. Although they accounted for over one-half of the nation's operating schools, they enrolled fewer than 10 per cent of the nation's pupils.⁴⁴

Fewer than one-sixth of the pupils in public schools were in systems with enrollments less than 1,200. Students attending in districts with enrollments of 1,200 to 6,000 accounted for about one-third of the total. Districts having 6,000 or more students, 1,069 in all, accounted for over half of the national enrollment.⁴⁵

⁴²Ibid., p. 88. ⁴³Ibid., p. 90.

⁴⁴United States Bureau of the Census, Census of Governments: 1962, Governmental Organization, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 5.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 6-7.

In 1962 there were slightly over 100,000 schools in operation. Table II compares school districts which have been categorized by the number of schools operated by the districts. Comparison is made as to the number of districts, the total enrollment, and per cent of enrollment represented by each category.⁴⁶

TABLE II
CATEGORIES OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS, NUMBER OF DISTRICTS,
PUPIL ENROLLMENT, AND PER CENT OF TOTAL ENROLLMENT
IN THE UNITED STATES, 1962

Number of Schools in District	Number of Districts	Enrollment	Per cent of Total Enrollment
20 or more	646	15,525,000	41.1
10 to 19	1,182	6,758,000	17.9
3 to 9	5,860	10,627,000	28.1
2	3,474	1,966,000	5.2
1	19,826	2,929,000	7.7

State patterns for reorganization. According to Kelly, the educational commissions which have been established to effect changes in the educational structure of a state cannot bring about voluntarily what the legislature must do to correct weaknesses in the educational program of the state.⁴⁷ It is impossible to review all action by legislative groups in the fifty states that affect local district structure. A few selected examples of state involvement in school district reorganization are reviewed in the following section.

⁴⁶Ibid., pp. 9-11. ⁴⁷Kelly, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

The Indiana School Reorganization Act and Amendments of 1961 illustrate the fact that state governments are acutely aware of the need to evaluate the present school organization structures.⁴⁸ The American Association of School Administrators classifies the types of state legislation for the reorganization of local school districts as follows:

1. Mandatory legislation reorganizes local school districts by direct legislative action without referring the action to the voters for approval.
2. Permissive legislation makes reorganization possible but leaves the initiation of action leading to reorganization and decisions on proposed reorganizations entirely with the voters at the local level in the areas affected.
3. Semipermissive legislation requires that certain steps and planning procedures for reorganizing districts be taken and that the proposed plan be submitted to the voters, but it leaves final approval or rejection of a proposed reorganization to a vote of the people in the area affected. Such legislation emphasizes planning with local adoption.⁴⁹

The state of Pennsylvania, which in 1932 had 2,587 school districts and in 1961 still had 2,185 districts, recently adopted Legislative Act 561, mandatory reorganization legislation. With few exceptions, by 1965 school districts are to be organized into complete units of 4,000 or more students.⁵⁰ Other states having mandatory legislation regarding

⁴⁸"Questions and Answers about the Indiana School Corporation Reorganization Act," op. cit., p. 1.

⁴⁹American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 167.

⁵⁰Evans, op. cit., p. 1.

reorganization are West Virginia, Maryland, Louisiana, Florida, Nevada, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Utah, Virginia, and Georgia.⁵¹ It may be noted that most of these states are in the South.

The approach to problems in school district organization in California may lead to school organization similar to that found in the states of Florida, Nevada, and West Virginia, where all systems are county-wide. A very similar organization exists in Maryland where large city districts are separate from the county districts.⁵² Currently proposed legislation in California may provide a pattern for other states to follow in effecting changes. According to Clemo, the original attempt at the California legislation, Assembly Bill 46, at the time of this writing, appears dead.⁵³ The author of the bill, Assemblyman Unruh, has introduced another assembly bill (AB 145) which has some changes and is still a live bill. Major points of this bill would cause mandatory reorganization into county-wide units if districts within the county do not meet specific state standards by a deadline, December 31, 1965.⁵⁴ It should be noted that local districts are given ample opportunity to

⁵¹American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 168.

⁵²United States Bureau of the Census, op. cit., p. 9.

⁵³Robert J. Clemo, State of California Department of Education, letter of April 7, 1964.

⁵⁴Assembly Bill Number 145, Amended in Assembly April 2, 1964, California Legislature, 1964 First Extraordinary Session.

bring about changes, and the law, if enacted, would cause change only after the failure of the local district to act.

The first state to adopt semipermisive legislation was Washington in 1941. This legislation is discussed in detail in Chapter IV. Some other states which followed with semipermisive legislation were Illinois, Iowa, Idaho, Minnesota, North Dakota, Missouri, Colorado, Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota, Ohio, and Oregon.⁵⁵ Most of these states are in the Midwest and Northwest.

Indiana recently passed semipermisive legislation. The major reasons for the Indiana legislation were to provide more equalized educational opportunities for public school pupils, to achieve greater equity in tax rates among the school corporations, and to provide more effective use of the tax money spent for education. The major facets of the Indiana law are that a county committee on education shall evaluate the organization of schools within each county, and that a State Commission shall review the findings and recommendations of the county committees.⁵⁶ This law simply provides a method for reorganization and does not establish standard requirements or demand reorganization. It must be regarded as a law which would not necessarily cause change, although it would allow and encourage it.

Although in 1958, about three-fourths of the states had statutory

⁵⁵American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 179.

⁵⁶"Questions and Answers about the Indiana School Corporation Reorganization Act," op. cit., p. 1.

provisions for reorganization, some of the laws did not go very far beyond recognizing that districts could reorganize. Some states having permissive legislation were Oklahoma, Montana, Connecticut, Arizona, Texas, and Indiana.⁵⁷ As discussed, Indiana has adopted other legislation.

⁵⁷American Association of School Administrators, op. cit., p. 175.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION IN WASHINGTON STATE

District organization in Washington State is similar to the local, intermediate, and state level organization found in many other states as explained in Chapter III. However, since the primary concern of this report is to discuss reorganization in the state of Washington, district patterns in Washington State are presented in detail.

I. LEGAL PROVISION FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION

Classification of school districts. The State Manual defines the school district unit in Washington State as follows:

A school district is a political subdivision of the State, established pursuant to the acts of the Legislature. It is defined by statute as "the territory under the jurisdiction of a single governing board....designed and referred to as the board of directors." It must comprise contiguous territory which may be located in a single county or in two or more counties. Each incorporated city must be included in a single school district; but the district may extend beyond the limits of the city and may include two or more incorporated cities. (L '47, pp. 1105-6, secs. 2,4,5.)¹

Each district is designated according to its class, which is determined by its size and population. First class districts are those districts having a total population of ten thousand or more, whereas a district with less than ten thousand population, but having at least one

¹Lloyd J. Andrews, State Manual of Washington (Olympia: State of Washington, 1960), p. 84.

incorporated city or one square mile of area or maintaining an accredited high school is classified as a second class district. All others are third class districts.²

School districts are also classified according to the function they perform. The common school district is the most frequently used pattern of organization. It is authorized and charged to provide education to students from grades one through twelve. The common school district is allowed, if it so chooses, to provide kindergarten, extended high school (grades thirteen and fourteen), to provide parental and evening schools, and may provide education for veterans and handicapped children.³

The union high school district is the corporation by which two originally separate districts combine efforts only for the operation of a high school, while all other activities of the affected districts remain separate. The laws allowing for the organization of union high school districts were repealed by the State Legislature in 1947, but provisions were made for the continuation of those districts already in existence.⁴

Joint districts are those districts having area in two or more counties, the intermediate administration for the district being vested with the office of the county superintendent in which the high school or largest school is located.⁵ Since the joint district may cross county boundaries, it is an example of the flexibility allowed for reorganization.

²Ibid., p. 87. ³Ibid., p. 83. ⁴Ibid., p. 87. ⁵Ibid.

Provisions for reorganization. The school district reorganization movement in Washington had its first real boost when the 1940 Legislature passed the school district reorganization law. This law provided that county reorganization committees (hereafter referred to as county committees) could initiate reorganization proposals, hold local hearings, and present proposals to the State Reorganization Committee (hereafter referred to as the State Committee). If and when the proposal was approved by the State Committee, it was returned to the county to be voted upon by voters residing in the proposed new district. An affirmative vote of 60 per cent of the vote cast by the electorate of the proposed new district was necessary to effect the new district's formation.⁶

Sections one to forty-three of the Laws of the State of Washington of 1947 repealed all existing laws concerning school district reorganization and established new statutes for this purpose. This set of laws, commonly called the School District Organization Act of 1947 also called for county committees. The act prescribed the duties and authority of the county and state school officials as related to territorial reorganization of school districts. Along with this, procedures governing changes and adjustments in organization were outlined.⁷ The act remains essentially intact, although it has been amended by acts of the Legislatures in 1951, 1953, 1955, 1957, and 1959.⁸

⁶Washington State Research Council, What Is a School District?, A Report Prepared by the Washington State Research Council (Seattle: The Washington State Research Council, 1957), p. 6.

⁷Andrews, op. cit., p. 103. ⁸Ibid.

The section of the 1947 law pertaining to mechanical implementation of reorganization was similar to the 1941 law except that the ratification procedure was changed so that the voters of each original district had to approve a new district's formation by a 60 per cent majority, rather than a majority of the voters in the total area to be reorganized as provided by the 1941 law.⁹ In 1955 this clause was again changed to be like the original 1941 law, but in 1957 was again changed so that 60 per cent of the voters in each original district must approve reorganization if it is to be effected.¹⁰ Table III shows the effect of the approval clause on the number of reorganizations which occurred under the different ratification systems.¹¹ When studying the table, it should be kept in mind that in 1941 through 1947 and in 1955 through 1957, only a majority of voters in the district to be created needed to approve reorganization, while in 1947 through 1955 a majority vote in each of the included districts was necessary.

The School District Reorganization Act of 1957 appears to have some very good provisions. However, the purpose of the law may not be fulfilled. This may happen if the county committee fails to act, if the State Board disapproves a proposal and actively kills reorganization, or if the majority vote needed by each of the original districts is not obtained.

⁹Washington State Research Council, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 7. ¹¹Ibid.

TABLE III
REDUCTION IN NUMBER OF DISTRICTS IN WASHINGTON
IN SELECTED YEARS BETWEEN 1941 AND 1956

Year	Reduction in Number of School Districts	Year	Reduction in Number of School Districts
1941-42	205	1950-51	20
1942-43	92	1951-52	11
1943-44	218	1952-53	9
1944-45	132	1953-54	11
1949-50	12	1955-56	42

The method by which local ratification is accomplished still appears to be a very critical stumbling block in reorganization. The Washington State Research Council discusses this part of the 1957 law as follows:

The influences exerted by residents of a few small school districts were successful during the 1957 legislative session in again reversing the manner of voting on new organization proposals. A misunderstanding or an apparent lack of understanding of the nature, purposes, and effects of both redistricting and today's education—or what a satisfactory district has that enables it to do what a weak district cannot do—coupled with (1) an emotional appeal stating that area voting constitutes a denial of the democratic process, and (2) effective lobbying won success for these minority interests. Scarcely six per cent of the state's students live in this large number of small enrollment districts.¹²

By the apparent lack of current legislation, and lack of current legislative recommendations pertaining to the method of local ratification of a school reorganization proposal, it appears that this problem will remain a problem, at least for the immediate future.

¹²Ibid.

Recommendations concerning county committees. According to the Washington State Research Council, the success in strengthening of school districts depends entirely on what is done by the local county committee.¹³ Testimony before the Washington State Legislature Interim Committee on Education indicated that a few of the county committees on school district organization had made excellent progress, and that the members of these committees felt that changes within the present legal provisions had been accomplished. It was, however, also shown that many county committees were non-active, or only infrequently active and that they failed to initiate reorganization action even when the need was obvious.¹⁴

Because of the apparent shortcomings existing in the present county committee arrangement, the Washington State Legislature Interim Committee on Education has made the following recommendations for the 1965 Washington State Legislature:

Recommendation Number 9

That the powers and duties now delegated by statute to county committees on school district reorganization be vested in presently constituted county boards of education.

Recommendation Number 10

That county boards of education be directed to prepare new long-range school district reorganization plans, or update present plans prepared in 1956, for submission to the State Board of Education and the 1965 Legislature.

¹³Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁴Frank B. Brouillet, Education in Washington, A Report by the Washington State Legislature Interim Committee on Education (Seattle: University of Washington, 1962), p. 34.

Recommendation Number 11

That in the event a county board of education fails to carry out the above directions, the State Board of Education shall prepare such plans.

Recommendation Number 12

That the State Board of Education be given the authority to initiate proposals for school consolidation¹⁵ upon the receipt of a petition from one school district. Election so initiated shall be paid for by the state, and validation of the election shall require a majority vote of each district affected.¹⁶

It would appear that legislative action on recommendations 9,10,11, and 12 would help overcome the problem of a non-functioning county committee on school organization, but would not affect the method for ratification of reorganization proposals.

Local control by districts. Statutes governing the establishment and control of schools in Washington State are based on the premise that the local district is responsible for providing its pupils with educational opportunity equal to that of other children throughout the state. The local district reserves this right as long as it fulfills the responsibility.¹⁷ However, Pierce declares that local control is non-existent in Washington State, due to state law determination of such factors as length of school year; transportation and construction support; and other large portions of financial support.¹⁸ Added to this is the influence

¹⁵According to context of explanation of the recommendation, it appears that this implies reorganization as well as consolidation.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 35-36. ¹⁷Washington State Research Council, op.cit., p. 2.

¹⁸Lawrence Pierce, "School District Reorganization--A Journey That Must Not End," (A report prepared for the King County School Organization Committee, Seattle: October, 1962), p. 3. (Mimeographed.)

of federal control through the specifications set up by the National Defense Education Act in the curriculums of math, science, and foreign languages, and through particular requirements for acquiring federal funds to maintain vocational programs in agriculture and vocational technical education.¹⁹ Another factor making the concept of local control a matter of conjecture, according to Pierce, is the requirements by colleges and universities which influence the academic programs of the junior and senior high schools.²⁰

Although much control of the public schools could be exercised by the release or retention of state funds, this is not a common practice. It appears that the small local district still maintains a high degree of independence in financial matters. All problems of small and ineffective districts will not be resolved by an abundance of funds.

II. FINANCING OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON STATE

The national ranking of Washington in specific categories related to finance is discussed in Section II. The laws pertaining to finance in Washington State are many and complex. Therefore, only a few far-reaching requirements are discussed in this section. The apportionment formula is also too detailed for full discussion here. The money distribution resulting from the formula will be presented in a general manner.

Comparison of Washington schools with national averages. With

¹⁹Ibid. ²⁰Ibid.

cognizance of the fact that there are many measuring devices by which school financial support can be determined and because many factors are involved, the following information concerning general population, school population, and educational costs are given so that the cost and enrollment of schools in Washington State may be compared to those of the nation as a whole. Kruzner gives this analysis concerning the schools of Washington. With a total population of about 3,000,000 in 1963, the enrollment in schools is approximately 700,000 or 23 per cent of the total population, making Washington twenty-eighth nationally in ratio of school population to general population. The predicted average annual cost per pupil in attendance in public schools in Washington in the 1963-1964 school year was \$515.00 which ranks eighth nationally. The average cost per adult for the 1963-1964 school year was estimated at \$209.65, or ninth in national ranking. The 1962 per capita personal income was \$2,485.00 or eleventh nationally while per cent of school operating costs per adult in relation to per capita income was 8.4 per cent, which ranked Washington seventeenth nationally. The average salary for each instructor in public schools was \$6,566.00 for 1963-1964, which ranked eleventh nationally.²¹

State financial support. The high national rankings reflect the willingness of the people of Washington to support public education. Another factor, of perhaps greater importance, is the large amount of

²¹ Donald L. Kruzner, "Where Does Our State Stand?" (Seattle: King County Schools, February, 1964), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

support which the state provides for the operation of the public schools.

Washington State is not unique in providing state support for education. However, because of the very limiting state constitutional restrictions on local property taxation, the "apportionment formula" provides a very generous amount of state support to the local district. A report prepared by the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare states that in Washington in 1962-1963, approximately 69 per cent of the non-federal revenues for public schools, grades K-14, was provided by state funds.²² The Washington Education Association reports that for the 1963-1964 biennium, the portion of state funds compared to the total funds for education, including federal funds, is 62 per cent.²³ The same report shows that local taxes furnish 23 per cent; county funds, 3 per cent; federal funds, 5 per cent; and miscellaneous funds, 7 per cent of the state's school revenue.²⁴

State apportionment is in three main parts. A foundation program of \$1.135 per student from the state general fund for each day of attendance, weighted to student classification, provides a large share of

²²United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, "Washington--Public School Finance Program, 1962-1963," A Report Prepared by the Office of Education--Bureau of Educational Research and Development--School Finance Section (Washington: Government Printing Office, February, 1963), p. 1.

²³Washington Education Association, "Let's Figure Our School District's Revenues," A Report Prepared by the WEA Research Department (Seattle: WEA Press, October, 1963), p. 7.

²⁴Ibid.

support. In addition, the state provides 90 per cent of approved cost for transportation and a fixed amount of \$2,852.51 per annum to the district for each certified employee.²⁵ In addition to these contributions by the state, the state school building construction fund provides up to 90 per cent of the cost of buildings, the amount being based on equalization valuation and the number of certified employees.²⁶

As an example of how the state portion of school support is calculated, the three basic parts of the formula were applied to an elementary district which had an average enrollment of 210 students and an average daily attendance of 200 students for a school term of 180 days. There were nine classroom teachers, one administrator, and an administrative assistant who was certified for teaching and guidance work. The school district spends \$14,000.00 per year for transportation, of which 70 per cent was approved by the State Department of Education. On the basis of \$1.135 per day for each student in daily attendance, the school received \$40,860.00 for student attendance. For each of the eleven certified employees, the school received \$2,852.57 for a total of \$31,378.27. In approving 70 per cent of the transportation costs, the State Department of Education agreed to pay that portion, which amounted to \$9,800.00. The amount of state aid was the total of these three parts, which amounted to \$82,038.27. It must be kept in mind that this represented

²⁵United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 3-4.

the foundation program, and that additional state funds were available for special educational programs and for capital improvement.

Legal provisions for the state's financial structure. The portion of school support provided by local district revenue is, as in most local governments, determined by property value. As determined by the state constitution, property is assessed at 50 per cent of its true value.²⁷ State law allows a common school district which maintains elementary and secondary schools to levy a fourteen mill tax for use in general operation of schools without any special action. An excess over the fourteen mill levy is possible only when authorized by a 60 per cent majority vote of the people in the district. Excess levies must be authorized annually, but there is no limit on the excess that may be levied.²⁸

In addition to the fourteen mill levy and excess levies for general operation, a district may contract bonded indebtedness with the authorization of the voters at a regular or special school election. School indebtedness is limited to 10 per cent of the district evaluation both by statute and the state constitution.²⁹ At first glance, this limit on indebtedness may seem very restrictive, but since the state

²⁷Constitution of the State of Washington (Olympia: State Printing Plant, 1959-60 edition), Amendment 17, an amendment to Art. 7, Sec. 2.

²⁸United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁹Ibid., p. 5.

school building fund provides up to 90 per cent of building costs, the restriction ceases to be a problem.

According to the Washington State Research Council, the major part of the state's general fund, 51.6 per cent, is from retail sales taxes.³⁰ Another large source, business and occupational taxes, provides 18.5 per cent. Of all other sources, none provide more than 5 per cent of the fund. Even the liquor tax provides only 3.1 per cent.³¹

III. PATTERNS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION IN WASHINGTON STATE

Distribution and number of districts. Washington State is divided into two distinct geographical sections, the area to the east and the area to the west of the Cascade Mountains. The area to the east represents much of the irrigated and dry farming area, mixed with some lumber industry and other industry. The area west of the Cascade Mountains has the most intense industry, lumbering, shipping, and related activities. The state is divided into thirty-nine counties that have wide differences in population and area. With the marked contrast in the geography and industry between the two sections, it is not surprising that the organization of school districts varies greatly throughout the state.

³⁰Washington State Research Council, State and Local Government in Washington (Seattle: Washington State Research Council, 1962), p. 191.

³¹Ibid.

When Washington became a state in 1889, there were 1,298 districts operating schools.³² As would be expected, with the growth of a new state, new communities with the resultant new school districts were spawned, so that by 1910, there were 2,710 operating districts.³³ In a very short time, however, it was apparent that many districts could do a better job by combining efforts, and by 1921, the number of districts had declined to 2,390.³⁴ In the following years the number of districts decreased until in 1939 there were about 1,700.³⁵ According to the Washington State Legislature Interim Committee on Education, the self-initiated process for reorganization of districts had run its course by 1939, and many inefficient small districts remained, mostly for reasons of local pride or prejudice.³⁶ As noted in Table III, page 36, further variations in the number of districts were very closely associated to the method by which the reorganization proposals were ratified in the affected districts. As of October 1, 1963, there were 389 districts in Washington.³⁷

As shown in Table IV, page 46, the number of districts in each county varied. Stevens county has the most districts, twenty-three, while Garfield County is made up of only one district. Five of Washington's

³²Albert E. Gerritz, "WEA's First 75 Years," Washington Education, LXXV (April, 1964), p. 30.

³³Brouillet, op. cit., p. 34. ³⁴Gerritz, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁵Brouillet, op. cit., p. 34. ³⁶Ibid.

³⁷As shown in Table V, page 57.

TABLE IV

ANALYSIS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ENROLLMENT IN WASHINGTON AS OF OCTOBER 1, 1963

County	0 999	1000 1999	2000 2999	3000 3999	4000 4999	5000 5999	6000 6999	7000 7999	8000 8999	9000 9999	10000 10999	11000 11999	12000 12999	13000 13999	14000 14999	15000 15999	16000 & over	Total Districts
1. ADAMS	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
2. ASOTIN	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
3. BENTON	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
4. CHELAN	9	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
5. CHALLAM	4	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
6. CLARK	4	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	10
7. COLUMBIA	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
8. COWLITZ	5	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
9. DOUGLAS	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
10. FERRY	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
11. FRANKLIN	2	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
12. GARFIELD	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
13. GRANT	9	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
14. GRAYS HARBOR	17	2	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
15. ISLAND	2	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
16. JEFFERSON	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
17. KING	5	2	3	1	1	-	2	3	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	3	22
18. KITSAP	-	1	2	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
19. KITTITAS	10	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
20. KLIKITAT	11	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
21. LEWIS	13	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
22. LINCOLN	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
23. MASON	9	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
24. OKANOGAN	12	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13
25. PACIFIC	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11
26. PEND OREILLE	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
27. PIERCE	9	3	3	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	20
28. SAN JUAN	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
29. SKAGIT	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
30. SKAMANIA	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
31. SNOHOMISH	10	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	19
32. SPOKANE	9	1	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	16
33. STEVENS	22	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
34. THURSTON	9	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12
35. WAHKIACUM	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
36. WALLA WALLA	7	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8
37. WHATCOM	5	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9
38. WHITMAN	19	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20
39. YAKIMA	7	4	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
TOTALS	275	38	30	11	3	4	8	5	2	1	2	-	2	1	-	1	6	389

counties have twenty or more districts, fifteen counties have between ten and nineteen districts each, and each of the other nineteen counties has less than ten districts.

Student enrollment in districts. All statistics discussed in the following section that pertain to Washington are from the most recent public school census, October 1, 1963, and are presented in detail in Table IV, page 46.

Of the 387 school districts in Washington State, 275, or about 70 per cent are districts that enroll fewer than 1,000 students. These districts fall far short of the minimum recommended enrollment size of schools for Washington, 1,200, as discussed on page 22.

When a higher figure of comparison, 3,000 is used, 343 or 86 per cent of the districts in Washington State have less than the required number enrolled. Nationally, 87 per cent of the districts classify in this category.³⁸ Of the 389 districts in Washington, 379 or 97.7 per cent fall below the 12,000 minimum enrollment figure as recommended by Pierce.³⁹ Nationally, 98.8 per cent of districts fall below this suggested minimum.⁴⁰ In the United States, only 302 districts, 10 of which are in Washington, have more than 12,000 students.⁴¹ These figures show that Washington is very close to the national average in percentage of

³⁸United States Bureau of the Census, Census of Governments: 1962. Governmental Organization, Vol. I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 8.

³⁹Pierce, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴⁰United States Bureau of the Census, op. cit., p. 8. ⁴¹Ibid.

very small districts.

There is wide variation in the student population of districts within the counties in Washington. King County is an example and is discussed in detail in Chapter V. Several counties in the state have a large proportion of districts with less than 1,000 students enrolled. Of the eleven districts in Kittitas County, ten have an enrollment of less than 1,000. Eleven of the thirteen districts in Klichkitat County have fewer than 1,000 students, and thirteen of Lewis County's districts have this low an enrollment. Other counties with a high number of districts under 1,000 in student population are Okanogan with twelve, and Whitman with nineteen. The most extreme example of low district enrollment appears in Stevens County which has 23 districts (the most of any county in the state). Twenty-two of these districts have fewer than 1,000 students and the other one has fewer than 2,000 students.

CHAPTER V

KING COUNTY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION AND PROPOSALS FOR REORGANIZATION

At the beginning of the 1963-1964 school year there were twenty-two school districts in King County. They are shown on the map, Figure 1, page 58. Since the publication of this map, the King County school districts have decreased from twenty-four to the present twenty-two. The Palmer District in November, 1963, and the Cumberland District in January, 1964, were absorbed into the Enumclaw District. The Sellack District will be absorbed into the Enumclaw District in July, 1964.

In this chapter it will be shown that there are variations in size, population, per pupil valuation, and geographical features among the school districts in King County and that these factors must be considered whenever district reorganization is being considered. The results of an opinionnaire sent to administrators and school directors in selected districts in King county will be discussed.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF DISTRICTS IN KING COUNTY

School population of districts. To illustrate the population distribution in King County, the King County Planning Department pointed out in 1960, that excluding the Seattle District, 90 per cent of the county school enrollment was represented by the twelve districts in the

urbanizing fringe of Seattle.¹ These districts are Auburn, Bellevue, Federal Way, Highline, Issaquah, Kent, Lake Washington, Mercer Island, Renton, Shoreline, and South Central. More recent figures made available by the King County Superintendent of Schools show that in October of 1963, these districts, excluding the Seattle District, had 114,163 of the 123,152 pupils enrolled in the King County schools.² This figure represents 92.7 per cent. When the enrollment of Seattle, 99,921, is included in the comparison, then 214,084 of the 223,073 or 94.5 per cent of the students in the county are represented by the thirteen districts of "Greater Seattle."³

According to the King County Planning Department, urbanization has proceeded at a much faster pace and has created greater population densities in some areas than was envisioned in earlier studies.⁴ School district boundaries designed for rural areas do not fit the urban situation.⁵ The advent of the junior college in King County, as allowed by recent legislation, has brought another factor into school planning.⁶

With reference to the present school district structure in King County, the King County Planning Department reports the following findings:

¹L. M. Dimmitt and Edward B. Sand, A Guide for School Planning in King County, Washington, A Report Prepared by the King County Planning Department and King County School Districts (Seattle: 1962), p. 3.

²"King County School District Enrollment, October, 1963, Assessed Valuations, Assessed Valuations Per Child," (Seattle: King County Superintendent of Schools, February 27, 1964), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

³Ibid. ⁴Dimmitt and Sand, op. cit., p. 4.

⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

1. Present school district boundaries in many cases bear little or no relationship to a desirable pattern of urban growth with plans for school-age children through the high school years to be within a convenient, safe walking distance of their school.

2. Although much has been done in the past to consolidate small, ineffective school districts in the county, many county districts are too small to provide the scale of economies or the range of specialized services necessary or desirable for a predominately urban community.

3. Even by 1985, a number of the outlying school districts in the county will not, individually, have sufficient enrollment to be able to provide a complete education system for their youngsters.⁷

If the recommended enrollment of 1,200 students per district is applied to King County, then seventeen of the twenty-two districts would be considered to be of adequate size. If the minimum figure of 10,000 students is applied, then only five of the twenty-two districts listed would qualify as being of adequate size to provide the educational needs of their districts.

Although it is usually thought that school reorganization involves the joining of small districts into larger districts, it must be kept in mind that about 91 per cent of the students in King County are educated in districts with enrollments of over 6,000 students. Approximately 70.5 per cent of the students in King County are in attendance in districts having over 12,000 students.⁸

Geographical distribution of districts. As may be noted on the map of King County, Figure 1, page 58, the school districts in the eastern

⁷Ibid.

⁸"King County School District Enrollment, October, 1963, Assessed Valuations, Assessed Valuations per Child," op. cit., p. 1.

portion of the county which include the rough terrain of the west slopes of the Cascade Mountains, represent a large geographical area. Conversely, this area represents only a small portion of the population in the county.

Two distinct areas of geographical isolation exist within King County. The most obvious of these is the Vashon Island District, which includes an entire island accessible only by ferry boat.

The other distinct area of isolation is the Lester School District. Although parts of the district are easily accessible, the school in the town of Lester is physically isolated during parts of the year. The Seattle Times reports that "The only public road out (of Lester) is one which climbs over Stampede Pass to the east and is closed during winter months by heavy snow."⁹ Although there are roads other than the public road, the others are in the watersheds of both Seattle and Tacoma, and are closed to public traffic. According to reports on the proposal of merger of Lester and Enumclaw Districts, the Lester District is opposed to any move to be annexed to Enumclaw without the provision of adequate public highway facilities.¹⁰

School financing in King County. With predicted growth of the urban fringe area of Seattle, it is anticipated that there will be an additional need for approximately 158 new elementary schools, 42 junior high schools, 17 senior high schools, and from 7 to 10 community junior colleges by 1985.¹¹ One of the recommendations of the King County Planning

⁹The Seattle Daily Times, April 28, 1964, p. 19. ¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Dimmitt and Sand, op. cit., p. 6.

Department is that a study of the administrative and financial base of the school system would be made along with a study of the school district organization.¹² Using the average assessed valuation per pupil as a basis for comparison, Table V, page 57, shows some interesting differences that are apparent in the district tax bases within the county. The two districts with the highest valuations per pupil are Lester and Skykomish as listed in the latest figures released by the King County Superintendent.¹³ Their high value in comparison to other districts is probably due, at least in part, to the fact that they both occupy some rich forest lands, and that they have a small student population over which to spread the wealth. When these factors are considered, the differences in assessed valuation per child are not as great as they appear on casual observation.

Some of the differences in the amount of local financial effort needed to support education are equalized by the determination of the basic support portion of the state aid for education.¹⁴ The total apportionment to the district for the year is reduced by the amount of deficiency in the local revenue resulting from the district's failure

¹²Ibid., p. 7.

¹³"King County School District Enrollment, October, 1963, Assessed Valuations, Assessed Valuations per Child," op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁴United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, "Washington—Public School Finance Program, 1962-1963," A Report Prepared by the Office of Education—Bureau of Educational Research and Development—School Finance Section. Washington: Government Printing Office, February, 1963.

to levy a maximum tax.¹⁵

II. PROPOSALS FOR REORGANIZATION OF DISTRICTS IN KING COUNTY

According to Kruzner, the task of effecting district reorganization is a difficult one, due to a shortage of personnel available, both in the county offices and at the local district level. Furthermore, the committees and administrators attempting to bring about reorganization must overcome resistance to change in their communities. This may be manifested as a misunderstanding of the demands on the educational services available, the "natural human resistance" to change, personal interests, fear that local schools will be discontinued, fear of loss of local control, or the non-specific fear of becoming a small part of a "too big" school system.¹⁶

Fitzwater states that the amount of unification of districts needed in King County is not large, measured in terms of the number of pupils involved. He goes on to indicate that some districts are in need of more elaborate organization structure if they are to support junior college programs, vocational programs, and specialized schools for handicapped students. He further suggests that a soundly organized intermediate unit might help in providing these education needs.¹⁷

¹⁶Donald L. Kruzner, "Statement for Presentation to the Washington State Legislative Committee on Education Subcommittee on School District Organization, Friday, October 20, 1961 at White Salmon Elementary School," (Seattle: King County Schools, 1961), p. 1. (Mimeographed.)

¹⁷C. O. Fitzwater, "The King County, Washington, School Study

The King County Planning Department reports that many of the educational services enjoyed by the small districts are available only through the co-operative efforts of the participating districts.¹⁸ The report goes on to indicate that the financing and administration for such services would be greatly simplified if there were a smaller number of districts.¹⁹

Three possibilities for reorganization in King County have been suggested. They are (1) the organization of a single county wide district, (2) the formation of a single district outside the area of the Seattle District, with the continuation of the Seattle District, and (3) the formation of a smaller number of districts, no more than six through grouping of existing districts. The alternative of any plan for reorganization would be to maintain the status quo, making minor boundary changes to solve transportation and attendance area problems as they occur. These possible avenues of action regarding reorganization in King County were incorporated into an opinionnaire study.

III. AN OPIONNAIRE STUDY OF ATTITUDES TOWARD REORGANIZATION PROPOSALS FOR KING COUNTY

Using the four possible reorganization alternatives in King County,

Project," (An appraisal report to the King County School District Organization Committee, Seattle, 1962), pp. 3-4.

¹⁸Dimmitt and Sand, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 39.

as discussed in Section II, page 54, an opinionnaire study was conducted to sample the reactions to each proposal. As was discussed in Chapter III, pages 15 and 16, there is frequent adverse reaction to attempts at reorganization. The opinionnaire study was undertaken to observe the reaction to proposals for reorganization in the specific area sampled. Distinction was made between administrators and directors to see if there were essential differences in attitudes toward reorganization between the two groups.

Method of procedure. All school directors, staff administrators, and building principals in the six districts selected for the opinionnaire study were sent the forms of the opinionnaire, (see Appendix pages 73-76) a cover letter, and a return addressed stamped envelope. The districts used for the study included Auburn, Kent, Black Diamond, Enumclaw, Federal Way, and Lester. Ninety-one opinionnaire forms were mailed.

The opinionnaire forms requested a primary response as to the proposal least liked and the proposal most liked. Following each of the primary responses, the respondent was asked to select and qualify by ranking 1, 2, or 3, the three factors which most influenced his choice.

Characteristics of sampled districts. The Auburn, Kent, Black Diamond, Enumclaw, Federal Way, and Lester Districts were selected for the study for several reasons. They are geographically adjacent; they represent wide variations in pupil enrollment, area, total valuation, and average valuation per pupil; and some of them have been considered

together in specific proposals for reorganization.²⁰ Figures made available by the King County Superintendent of Schools are compiled in Table V and provide comparison for some of the variations of the districts included in the study. Another reason for choosing these districts was that they comprise much of the natural attendance area for the Green River Community College, scheduled to open in the Auburn District in the fall of 1964.

TABLE V
ENROLLMENT AND VALUATION COMPARISONS OF DISTRICTS
INCLUDED IN THE OPINIONNAIRE STUDY

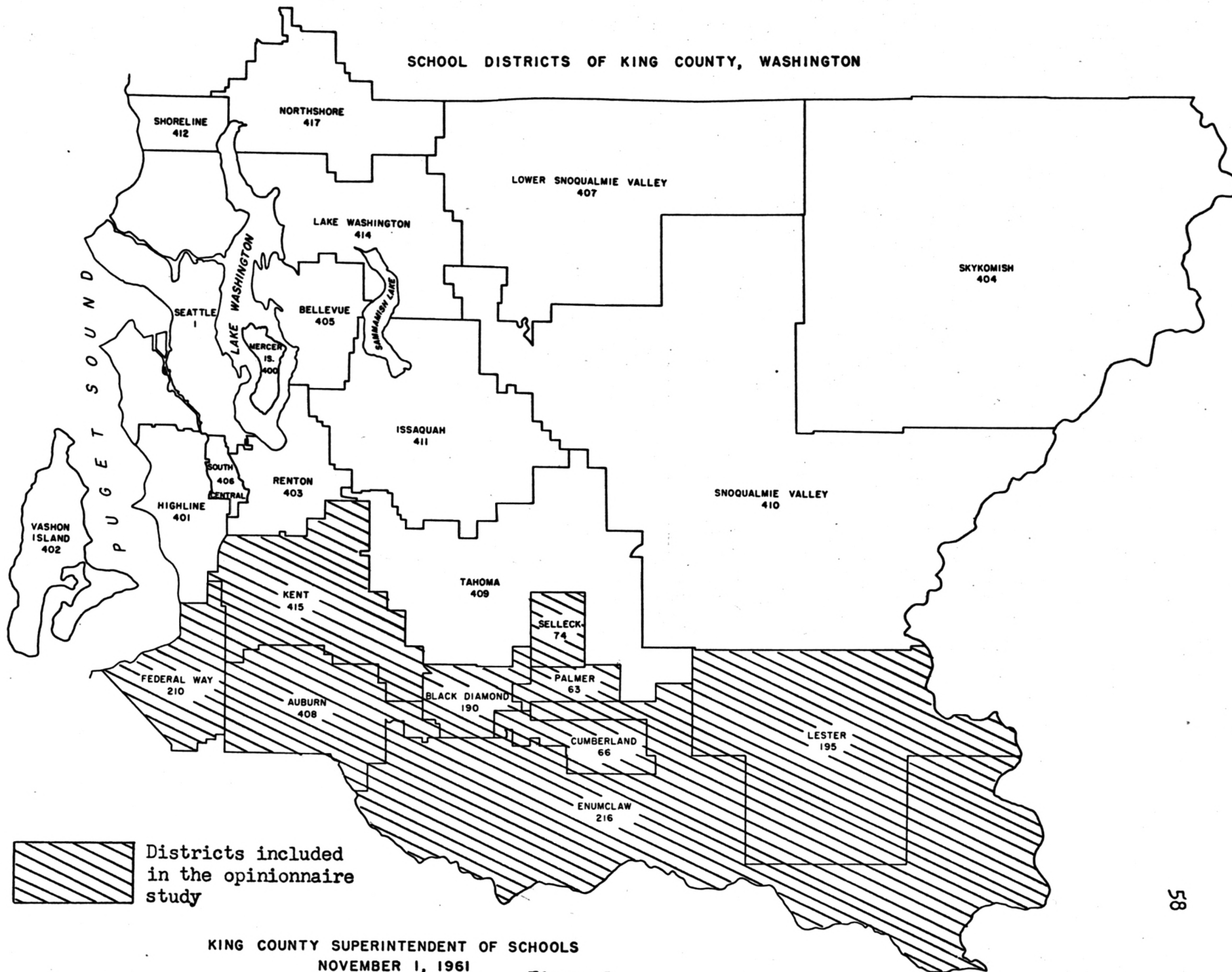
District and Number	Enrollment October, 1963	Total Assessed Valuation	Assessed Valuation Per Child
Auburn, No. 408	6,365	\$31,665,394.00	\$ 4,974.92
Black Diamond, No. 190	229	929,136.00	4,044.26
Enumclaw, No. 216*	2,436	14,182,301.00	5,821.96
Federal Way, No. 210	7,246	24,179,710.00	3,336.97
Kent, No. 415	7,247	29,731,862.00	4,102.64
Lester, No. 195	41	1,726,576.00	42,111.61

*Figures for Enumclaw include Palmer and Cumberland.

The area included in the study is shown as the shaded part of the map, Figure 1, page 58. As was mentioned earlier, the Palmer and Cumberland Districts as shown on the map are now part of the Enumclaw District, having joined with it in November, 1963, and January, 1964,

²⁰"King County School District Enrollment, October, 1963, Assessed Valuations, Assessed Valuations per Child," op. cit., p. 1.

SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON



Districts included
in the opinionnaire
study

KING COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS
NOVEMBER 1, 1961

Figure 1

respectively. The Sellack District was specifically excluded from the study as it is scheduled to join the Enumclaw District in July, 1964.

Results of the study. Opinionnaire forms were mailed to school board directors and school administrators in the sampled area. Sixty-six forms were sent to administrators while twenty-six were sent to directors, making a total mailing of ninety-two forms. The administrators showed a high rate of response with forty-four, or 67 per cent of the forms returned. There were only eight, or 31 per cent of the forms returned by directors. The total number of forms returned was fifty-three, or 58 per cent of the total sent.

TABLE VI

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES TO PROPOSALS LEAST LIKED AND MOST LIKED
IN OPINIONNAIRE AS INDICATED BY SCHOOL BOARD
DIRECTORS AND SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Proposal	Number of Responses Showing Proposal to be Least Liked		Number of Responses Showing Proposal to be Most Liked	
	Directors	Administrators	Directors	Administrators
I	0	6	6	26
II	2	1	1	14
III	0	4	0	0
IV	6	32	0	3

The frequency of primary responses, shown in Table VI, differentiates the respondents as directors or administrators. Qualification of the factors influencing the primary responses are shown in Tables VII and VIII, page 60 which show factors affecting the selection of proposals least liked, and in Tables IX and X, page 61, which show factors affecting the selection

TABLE VII

VALUE OF RESPONSES TO FACTORS LISTED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
AS WHY PROPOSALS ARE LEAST DESIRABLE*

Factors	Proposals selected as least desirable			
	I	II	III	IV
1	4	0	1	1
2	7	0	0	2
3	0	0	8	53
4	4	0	0	2
5	15	3	5	8
6	1	1	9	52
7	3	0	1	7
8	0	0	0	1
9	1	0	0	6

*Response code: Rank No. 1 = 3 points, rank No. 2 = 2 points,
rank No. 3 = 1 point.

TABLE VIII

VALUE OF RESPONSES TO FACTORS LISTED BY SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTORS
AS WHY PROPOSALS ARE LEAST DESIRABLE*

Factors	Proposals selected as least desirable			
	I	II	III	IV
1	0	0	0	0
2	0	0	0	1
3	0	3	0	11
4	0	0	0	0
5	0	4	0	0
6	0	5	0	13
7	0	0	0	3
8	0	0	0	0
9	0	0	0	0

*Response code: Rank No. 1 = 3 points, rank No. 2 = 2 points,
rank No. 3 = 1 point.

TABLE IX

VALUE OF RESPONSES TO FACTORS LISTED BY SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
AS WHY PROPOSALS ARE MOST DESIRABLE*

Factors	Proposals selected as most desirable			
	I	II	III	IV
1	24	7	0	2
2	15	1	0	1
3	35	6	0	0
4	0	23	0	9
5	1	19	0	3
6	6	16	0	2
7	23	12	0	1
8	0	0	0	0

*Response code: Rank No. 1 = 3 points, rank No. 2 = 2 points,
rank No. 3 = 1 point.

TABLE X

VALUE OF RESPONSES TO FACTORS LISTED BY SCHOOL BOARD DIRECTORS
AS WHY PROPOSALS ARE MOST DESIRABLE*

Factors	Proposals selected as most desirable			
	I	II	III	IV
1	8	0	0	0
2	9	1	0	0
3	11	0	0	0
4	0	3	0	0
5	0	6	0	0
6	4	0	0	0
7	3	2	0	0
8	1	0	0	0

*Response code: Rank No. 1 = 3 points, rank No. 2 = 2 points,
rank No. 3 = 1 point.

of proposals most liked. In all tables relating to the ranking of factors, the values were numerically derived from weighting of responses so that a first rating is worth three points, a second is worth two, and a third is worth one.

All but ten of the responses were received within nine days of the mailing. In addition to the fifty forms which were tabulated, three forms were returned blank or improperly completed. A letter was received from the school administrator from Lester, stating that his district was in 'danger' of being annexed, and that district officials were suspicious of the purpose of the study. The administrator went on to say that he would respond to the opinionnaire and would encourage the school board directors to respond if it could be proved that the study had no connection with the plans for reorganization which were confronting the district. Following a letter of reassurance, there was no response from either the school administrator or school board directors of the district.

Occasionally, portions of the forms were omitted. This caused the variations in the tabulations in Table VI, page 59, which shows eight school board directors and forty-three school administrators indicated they disliked specific proposals, whereas seven school board directors and forty-three school administrators indicated they liked specific proposals.

It can be noted in Table VI that most of the responses, thirty-eight out of fifty, or 76 per cent, indicated that proposal IV was least liked. This proposal was for a single county district. It is not

surprising then, that thirty-two, or 64 per cent of the fifty respondents indicated proposal I, essentially the maintenance of the status quo, as the most liked.

The qualification factors as to why specific primary selections were made served two purposes in the study. The obvious purpose was to determine which factors were felt to be most important in forming the opinions which were sampled. The less obvious purpose was that of providing face validity information. With respect to the information used in the face validity examination of the tabulated results, only ten of a total 492 weighted response values, or 2.0 per cent, were attached to factors which were inconsistent with the primary responses. All of the inconsistencies were associated with selections of proposals which were least liked. Nine of the ten inconsistent response values are attributed to administrators, while only one is attributed to a director.

The comparison of factors which influenced primary responses for proposals least liked is shown in Tables VII and VIII, page 60. The tables are similar, except that Table VII is a tabulation of weighted responses of factors selected by administrators, whereas Table VIII is a tabulation of weighted responses of factors selected by directors. It must be kept in mind that the numbers listed in the columns below each of the proposal numbers indicates a weighted value for the responses given in the opinionnaire form. The code, as explained in the method of procedure, is also shown at the bottom of each of the tables. The horizontal rows correspond to those factors which are numbered in the extreme left hand column. The factors were not numbered in the original opinionnaire form, but were

numbered for tabulation purposes in the numerical order in which they occurred in the form. As an example of the tabulation method, it may be noted in Table VII that the greatest number of weighted values are recorded under column IV which related to proposal IV of the opinionnaire. The third tabulation from the top of the column is the number 53, which indicates weighted value fifty-three is attached to factor three as to why proposal IV is least liked. Factor three is listed in the opinionnaire form as the administrative unit would be too large to be efficient. It is concluded that this is one of the major reasons for proposal IV being selected as least liked.

As shown in Tables VII and VIII, none of the directors selected proposal I as least desirable. The administrators who made this selection, appeared to be in general agreement that one factor was uppermost in importance. Factor five, that tax variances would not be adequately equated, precipitated a weighted value of fifteen. Factors such as our schools would be unable to offer special services; our schools could not offer broad enough programs; the administrative units would be too small to be efficient, received weighted values of seven, four, and four respectively. It would appear then that the major criticism of proposal I is that it would not adequately equate tax differences between districts. The other three factors, all referring to the quality of the educational program, did not collectively receive as high a weighted rating as the factor concerning tax inequity.

Examination of Tables IX and X, page 61, show definite preferences for factors associated with the selection of proposal I as most liked.

The factors and weighted values were local control of schools would be better maintained, forty-six; attendance areas would be more easily planned, thirty-two; overall efficiency of operation would be greater than with other plans, twenty-six; and transportation problems would be minimized, twenty-four. Again, the factors which were indicated as most important were related to the administrative aspects of school operation, and not to the educational programs.

Table VI shows that proposal II was least liked by only two respondents, and was most liked by fifteen. Tables VII and VIII show the major factors in choosing proposal II as least liked were tax variances would not be adequately equated, and local control would be lost. These factors had weighted values of seven and five, respectively. Tables IX and X show that proposal II had a broader set of factors associated with its acceptance. Those factors, with their weighted values were tax inequities would be reduced, twenty-six; broader programs would be enjoyed by the people of the district, twenty-four; more effective use of personnel would be possible, sixteen; and the overall efficiency of operation would be greater than with other plans, twelve. In this portion of the study, it appears that the quality of the educational program was a factor of importance about equal to those identifying financial and administrative aspects.

Proposal II was selected as a primary choice only four times in the entire study, giving it the fewest responses of any. All four of the responses were by administrators, and in all instances were indicated as being least liked. The factors and their weighted values associated

with this selection were local control would be lost, nine; administrative units would be too large to be efficient, eight; and tax variances would not be adequately equated, five. Again, factors associated with administrative and financial aspects of education were foremost as criteria for rejection of the proposal.

Proposal IV, the plan for reorganizing the entire county into a single district elicited the most responses as least liked, with 76 per cent of the respondents making this selection. There was little doubt as to the rejection of proposal IV, or the influencing factors. Tables VII and VIII, page 60, show that with school administrators as well as school board directors, a major part of the weighted values were associated with two factors. The factor, local control would be lost, received a weighted value of fifty-two and thirteen from administrators and directors respectively, while the factor, the administrative units would be too large to be efficient, received values of fifty-three and eleven from administrators and directors, respectively. Only three respondents, all administrators, indicated that proposal IV was most liked, the major reasons for their selections being tax inequities would be reduced and broader programs would be enjoyed by the people of the district. These factors received weighted values of nine and three respectively, again showing prime concern for the financial aspects of reorganization.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY

The trend of change in school district structure has been toward reorganization causing a reduction in the number of districts. This was found to be true throughout the nation as well as in Washington State and King County. Besides the reorganization of two or more districts into a single district, the discontinuation of non-operating school districts has further reduced the number of school districts throughout the nation. Factors which enabled, and in some cases caused, consolidation were improved transportation, shifting of population to urban centers, inequities of tax structures, the need for more economical operation of schools, demands for better educational services from the schools, and specific legislation designed to promote and provide for larger districts. In spite of the changes which have come about, there are still a large number of districts which are unable to provide the quality of educational programs needed.

Although the advantages of reorganization were well documented, it was found that deterrents to reorganization exist. Among the reasons found for people wanting the continuation of small districts were the traditional desire to maintain home rule, the desire to perpetuate religious, ethnic or political viewpoints, the failure to realize the weaknesses of a small district, or the failure to agree on a solution to problems confronting the district.

The deterrents to reorganization were illustrated in the

opinionnaire study of six districts in King County, Washington. School administrators and school board directors polled identified an overwhelming approval of keeping the existing school district organization. The reasons listed were: local control of the schools would be better maintained, attendance areas would be more easily planned, and overall efficiency of operation would be greater than with other plans. The unquestionable rejection of a proposal to incorporate the entire county into a single district reflected the same attitude. The reasons for the rejection were found to be local control would be lost and administrative units would be too large to be efficient. Perhaps the most important finding is that implied by omission, the fact that the quality of the educational program was not a major factor in either the acceptance or rejection of a reorganization proposal.

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APPENDIX

Seattle, Washington
April 7, 1964

Dear Administrator or School Director:

As a partial requirement for graduate study at Kansas State University, I am conducting a study of the school district structure in King County, and would appreciate your notation and/or comments on the attached opinionnaire.

As you may notice on the form, you are identified only by your school district and whether you are an administrator or school director. Your personal identify is not necessary for this report. Frankness of your opinion will be appreciated.

Your assistance in this study is appreciated. A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely yours,

John L. Baird

As you know, there have been several proposals to reorganize schools in King County in an attempt to alleviate the present and future administrative problems brought about by the rapid growth and change in the Puget Sound area. The most common proposals are listed below, in order of the breadth of their scope.

Proposal I

Make small modifications of district boundaries to solve attendance area problems as they occur.

Proposal II

Organize the county into a number of large administrative units, no more than six, to provide more comprehensive programs, and better equalize extreme tax inequities.

Proposal III

Organize the county into two administrative units, one the Seattle district, the other, all county areas not in the Seattle district, to provide administrative continuity and make a more equitable tax base for the two districts.

Proposal IV

Organize the county into a single administrative unit, providing a county wide tax base, eliminating tax inequities within the county.

With reference to the listed proposals, will you please check your responses on the following page? Thank you for your assistance.

Of the proposals presented, which do you think would do the least to solve the present and future problems in your district?

Circle one please.

I. II. III. IV.

Please rank in order of importance the three greatest disadvantages you can foresee in the proposal you selected as least desirable by placing 1, 2, or 3 in the box at the left of the statement.

- () Our schools could not offer broad enough programs.
- () Our schools would not be able to offer adequate special services.
- () The administrative units would be too large to be efficient.
- () The administrative units would be too small to be efficient.
- () Tax variances would not be adequately equated.
- () Local control would be lost.
- () Our community would pay for education in other communities.
- () There would be a reduction in local employment.
- () Other (please specify).

Of the proposals presented, which do you think would do the most to solve the present and future problems in your district?

Circle one please.

I. II. III. IV.

Please rank in order of importance the three greatest advantages you can foresee in the proposal you selected as most desirable by placing 1, 2, or 3 in the box at the left of the statement.

- () Attendance areas would be more easily planned.
- () Transportation problems would be minimized.
- () Local control of schools would be better maintained.
- () Tax inequities would be reduced.

- () Broader programs would be enjoyed by the people of the district.
- () More effective use of personnel would be possible.
- () Overall efficiency of operation would be greater than with other plans.
- () Other (please specify).

A REPORT ON ORGANIZATION AND REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS
WITH EMPHASIS ON KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON, PARTICULARLY
THE PRESENT DISTRICTS OF AUBURN, BLACK DIAMOND,
ENUMCLAW, FEDERAL WAY, KENT, AND LESTER

by

JOHN LAWRENCE BAIRD

B. S., Washburn University, 1960

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

School of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1964

Justification for a report of the problem. Shifts in the distribution of population, saturation of many metropolitan areas, rapid suburban growth, greater demands on public education, inequities in tax structures, and demands by citizens for more efficient and effective use of tax moneys are factors causing renewed looks in the direction of school reorganization. With attention brought to the changes in the school organization of states throughout the nation, it is essential to study the numerous ways in which current problems are being met, and how they compare with reorganization efforts being made in Washington State.

Definition of the problem. In this study, the general patterns and methods of school district organization and reorganization were discussed, with particular emphasis on Washington State and King County, Washington. The history, laws, and finance of public schools in Washington State were emphasized. School administrators and school board directors in six districts of King County were polled by opinionnaire study to determine their attitudes toward four specific proposals concerning reorganization in King County.

The study. A review of the history of education in Washington State showed that from the beginning of the settlement of the Northwest Territory until recent years, the number of school districts increased along with the increase in population and the establishment of communities and cities. In more recent years, the number of school districts has been decreasing. The most noticeable decreases in the number of districts, throughout the nation as well as in Washington State, have been in the years following World War II. The decrease in the number of districts

was found to be the result of two major types of action; the discontinuation of non-operating districts, and the joining of two or more small districts into larger districts. Factors which enabled, and in some cases caused, consolidation were improved transportation, shifting of population to urban centers, demands for better educational services from the public schools, and specific legislation designed to promote and provide for larger districts.

Although the advantages of reorganization are well documented, it was found that deterrents to reorganization exist. Some of the reasons found for people wanting the continuation of small districts were: the traditional desire to maintain home rule, the desire to perpetuate religious, ethnic, or political viewpoints, the failure to recognize the weaknesses of a small district, and the failure to agree on a solution to problems confronting the district.

An opinionnaire study was conducted in six districts of King County, Washington, to determine the degree of acceptance or rejection of specific proposals for reorganization. Four proposals were presented, ranging from keeping the present organizational structure to the adoption of a single county-wide district. Results of the study showed approval of keeping the existing school district organization by 64 per cent of the respondents, the primary reasons given were: local control of the schools would be better maintained, attendance areas would be more easily planned, and overall efficiency of operation would be greater than with other plans. A proposal to incorporate the entire county into a single district was rejected by 76 per cent of the respondents, the primary

reasons were: local control would be lost, and administrative units would be too large to be efficient. It was noted that reasons for both rejection and approval of specific proposals were associated with local control and administrative efficiency. Factors related to the quality of educational programs were not considered important by respondents.

The findings of the report brought out two distinct conclusions. The school districts in King County, Washington and in Washington State, as well as in other states throughout the nation, are undertaking modifications in their structures in order to meet the demands being made on the institutions of public education. It was also found that there is resistance to this change, that people tend to want their schools to remain unchanged. These attitudes were found to exist among school administrators and school board directors of six districts in King County, Washington.